

# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

**SAU 20**  
**Richard Steudle, Superintendent**

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**Visit Conducted on:**

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# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

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Students with Disabilities  
  
(Commendations, Citations and Suggestions for each school)

Note: *It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.*

# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

## **SAU 20**

### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted in SAU 20 comprised of the following schools: Preschool programs at the Community Preschool and New Hampshire Community Technical College Preschool, Head Start, Edward Fenn Elementary School, Milan Village School, Errol Consolidated School, Gorham Middle School and Gorham High School. The visiting team met on March 23 - 24, 2000 in order to review the status of special education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of special education staff, analysis of SPEDIS data and random inspection of student records. Interviews were conducted with the Superintendent, Special Education Director, building principals, regular and special education teachers and related service personnel as time and availability permitted. In addition, the team conducted parent interviews via telephone. Throughout the visit, the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report that you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the NH State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no citations of noncompliance to the Standards found in that particular area.

### **II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS PROGRAM APPROVAL: *Conducted on October 24-25, 1994***

It is apparent that issues identified during the previous program approval visit have been addressed. The visiting team was favorably impressed with the Special Education Plan and all of the new forms that have been revised to meet the new standards. Overall, files appeared to be better organized and complete. The increase of needed clerical staff in the schools has helped with scheduling meetings, contact with parents and in organization of paperwork. The LEA representative in each building is clearly identified. Care should be taken, however, for the LEA representative to identify himself or herself when signing the required paperwork. The addition of a behavioral specialist, half time at the Middle/high School and half time at the Edward Fenn School, has proven to be a real bonus. In addition to case managing some middle/high school students, she has helped with behavior plans and family issues in both schools. However, as in the previous program approval, the special educator at the Middle/high School currently has a large caseload of students and is not able to provide the direct service required in IEPs.

### **III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

Throughout the program approval visit, the visiting team was very impressed with the efforts of all staff to provide quality programming to all students in the least restrictive environment. An atmosphere of caring, support, dedication and mutual respect for students and staff was evident in visiting each school. Paraprofessionals are used throughout the SAU and are viewed as a major support system to the special education staff. All special education staff are currently certified in their area of specialty. However, there is no certified special educator at the Errol Consolidated School. The special education administrator and a special educator from another program are providing supervision, but on-going attempts should be made to hire a certified special educator for that building. There is also some concern at the Middle/high School that regular education teachers are not modifying their curriculum as required by individual education plans. More supervision, direct leadership and in-service

training may help in this area. On the other hand, the high school should be commended for heterogeneous grouping of all English classes, which allows for more inclusion of special needs students in regular classes. The issue of space and accessibility is a concern in several programs.

There continues to be an emphasis on providing the least restrictive programming for disabled children in SAU 20. There are no students placed in private out-of-district placements and efforts are made to provide all services to children within the district. The collaboration of area special education administrators to bring needed services into the area is evident. A newly formed Regional Interagency Collaborative has written grants to provide a system of care for emotionally and mentally disturbed children in the area. The grant brings people from all service agencies together to plan "wrap around" services to identified children. Programs that appropriately integrate special needs students with their non-disabled peers are evident in each district.

The citations that appear in the report that follows are due mainly to "housekeeping" types of errors and oversights in policy and procedures rather than chronic problems with compliance. In fact, it is commendable that, out of 104 special needs students in the district, none are out of compliance. One example of an "oversight" is that of Ed. 1109.04, in regard to sending procedural safeguards with each notice of a meeting. People are doing this, however there is no documentation on the meeting notice that the rights were attached. One sentence on the bottom of the meeting notice will correct this.

Overall, the program approval team would like to commend SAU 20 for quality services made available to all students.

#### **IV. COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS: SAU-WIDE**

##### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- In each of the buildings, there is administrative support and involvement in the special education process.
- The individual district school boards are extremely supportive of special education programs.
- The leadership skills of the special education director, including close work with families, supervision of staff, and collaboration have been an asset to the SAU. Bonnie Agrodnia will certainly be missed!
- The SAU had done an excellent job of addressing the issues of the previous program approval and continues to pay attention to those few that are still outstanding.
- The preschool program is truly inclusionary. It integrates children with their non-disabled peers and included activities which transition them to the school where they will attend kindergarten during their preschool years.
- Weekly team meetings at the Edward Fenn School, which allows for immediate intervention of the needs of children is to be commended.
- The addition of a part-time behavioral specialist in two schools is working well.
- Heterogeneous classes at the high school, which allows for more inclusive programming for special needs students.
- Collaboration is evident among people in buildings, between buildings and between area SAUs.
- The writing of grants that promote systems changes and brings additional services into the SAU is both worthwhile and beneficial.
- The building that houses the SAU and one preschool, which is a wonderfully restored building, brings together community mental health services, family strengths, a parent information center and other community resources.
- The staff are commended for the total compliance of student information in the SPEDIS system. No child in SAU 20 is out of compliance with state and federal requirements.

##### **CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

There are no SAU wide citations. Those that are listed in the individual school reports are minimal.

##### **SUGGESTIONS:**

There are no SAU-wide suggestions. See individual reports for building suggestions.

## PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Community Preschool 2) NH Technical College Preschool

**NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED:** 3 FILES

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- There is an excellent staff to student ratio.
- Transition from pre-school to kindergarten seems well planned out.
- Parents are involved and informed.
- The inclusion model is working well.
- Preschool staff are well trained and knowledgeable.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

Ed. 1109.04 3 files: lacked evidence that procedural safeguards were given with each notice of an IEP meeting.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Additional space would be welcomed at the Technical College Preschool Program.
- Provide handicap access to restrooms on the second floor at the Technical College Preschool Program.

## EDWARD FENN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Resource Room 2) Gr. 2 Classroom 3) Gr. 4 Classroom

**NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED:** 3 FILES

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- Collaborative effort between all personnel was evident.
- The principal is very supportive of all staff members and programs.
- Core team meets weekly to discuss student's progress and problems.
- Staff are extremely dedicated to the overall education of the students.
- Highly qualified paraprofessionals work well with staff and students.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

<u>Ed. 1107.07</u>	3 files: lacked evidence that evaluation report was given to parents.
<u>Ed. 1107.08(c)</u>	1 file: lacked classroom observation.
<u>Ed. 1109.01(b)</u>	3 files: listed goals, but no evidence of ability to measure the goals.
<u>Ed. 1109.01(n)</u>	1 file: IEP lacked parental signature.
<u>Ed. 1109.03</u>	1 file: lacked evidence that parent was present at IEP/placement meeting
<u>Ed. 1109.04</u>	3 files: lacked evidence that procedural safeguards given with each notice of IEP meeting.
<u>Ed. 1109.11</u>	1 file - lacked evidence that parents were informed of progress on IEP annual goals.
<u>Ed. 1111.01</u>	3 files: lacked evidence of opportunity to participate in physical education.
<u>Ed. 1123.04(a)(7)</u>	Public listing of employees with access to files did not include names of individuals.
<u>Ed. 1125.03</u>	1 file: Written prior notice did not contain all required components.
<u>300.347(a)(4)</u>	3 files: lacked explanation of the extent to which the student will not participate with non-disabled peers in reg. classes.
<u>300.347(a)(5)</u>	3 files: statewide or district-wide assessments of student achievement modifications in the administration of test.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- More categorical filing system within special education folders.
- Additional certified special education teacher is needed. The current teacher has a caseload of 27 students and does not appear to have adequate time to case manage and provide direct service to students.
- Additional space for specialist.
- Provide teachers with more inservice training in the area of classroom modifications.

- Allow for additional consultation time between resource room staff and classroom teachers.



## MILAN VILLAGE SCHOOL

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Resource Room 2) Modified Regular Classroom  
3) Speech/Language Services

**NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 3 FILES**

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- Excellent support from other teachers who are willing to help modify both in and out of regular classroom.
- The special education teacher has an "open door" policy and is always willing to help, assist and support teachers.
- Students appear to be extremely happy.
- The building provides for a wonderful learning environment.
- There is great communication between staff and parents.
- Paraprofessionals are ready, willing and able to modify regular programs to meet the individual needs of students.
- It is expected that paraprofessionals and regular education teachers are part of the team.
- The hands-on curriculum is wonderful and staff are willing to make modifications and work as a team.
- The special education teachers and paraprofessionals working with students are always willing to go the extra mile.

### **CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

Ed. 1107.05(k) 1 file: lacked evidence that the evaluation meeting was completed within 45 days and extension was not found in file.

Ed. 1107.07 2 files: lacked evidence that teacher certified in the area of suspected disability was on team.

Ed. 1109.01(b) 1 file: no statement of how this affects reg. ed. Curriculum. No clear understanding of why special need, i.e. need for aide. Needs more data and information.

Ed. 1109.04 3 files: procedural safeguards noted on meeting minutes/WPN, eval summary and IEP. Needs to be added to meeting notice.

CFR. 300.347 1 file: Lacked notation of time frames (i.e. quarterly review) but quarterly reports were available.

CFR. 300.344(a) 1 file: Labels were not present so was unable to determine who team members were, especially special education teachers.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- Larger space, with a smaller space for testing, is needed for the resource room.
- Can other space be utilized in the afternoon by resource room personnel while Reading Recovery uses resource room space?
- Provide more training for paraprofessionals.
- Improve handicap accessibility.

- Staff would benefit from an increase of paraprofessionals in the regular education classroom.

## ERROL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Modified Regular Classroom

**NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED:** 2 FILES

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- Staff work together well and provide a team environment.
- Staff are utilized effectively.
- The principal provides support to staff and is considered a valuable member of the team.
- The school board is very supportive of special education and have a true interest in the students.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

<u>Ed. 1107.02(b)</u>	2 files: lacked evidence of written notice to parents.
<u>Ed. 1107.03(a)</u>	1 file: lacked evidence that teacher of suspected disability was included on team.
<u>Ed. 1107.05(k)</u>	2 files: evaluation was not conducted within timeline. 1 file: lacked evidence of permission to evaluate.
<u>Ed. 1107.07</u>	1 file: lacked evidence that teacher of suspected disability included in determination of disability.
<u>Ed. 1109.03</u>	1 file: lacked evidence that the special education teacher and parent were present at meeting or that attempts were made to reschedule meeting.
<u>Ed. 1109.04(a)</u>	No evidence that procedural safeguards are given with each notice of meeting. Notation was made on WPN, IEP and evaluation summary only.
<u>Ed. 1119.07</u>	Special education teacher is not certified in special education.
<u>Ed. 1123.05</u>	2 files: lacked evidence that written prior notice given to parents for IEP meeting.
<u>Ed. 1125.04(a)</u>	1 file: lacked evidence of permission to test.
<u>Ed. 1125.04</u>	1 file: lacked evidence of parental consent to evaluate.
<u>CFR. 300.346(a)</u>	1 file: Parent was invited, but minutes did not reflect parent input or attempt to get parent there.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Additional space is needed for the resource room program.
- Improvement in record keeping is suggested to ensure that IEPs, paperwork and SPEDIS forms match. There is evidence of amendments or changes to programs, but all paperwork does not reflect the changes.
- A certified special education teacher needs to be in place.

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Resource Room

**NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED:** 2 FILES

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- There is an excellent collaboration of middle school team to meet student needs.
- Teachers, paraprofessionals, regular educators, guidance and administrative personnel provide a very positive climate for student academic and social achievement.
- The addition of a social worker to the team is a very positive step in meeting the needs of students.
- Student records are very organized and well maintained.
- The guidance secretary is knowledgeable about special education.
- There is a high level of communication between regular and special education staff.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

1107.03 LEA rep. Signs but does not attend meetings.  
CFR.300.504(a)(2)

1109.01 IEP did not include present levels of performance.  
CFR.300.347 IEP did not indicate how the disability affects involvement & progress in general curriculum.

Ed. 1109.01(1) 1 file: transition statement not included in IEP  
CFR.300.347(b)(1)

Ed. 1109.04 1 file: IEP lacked parental signature, evidence of parent's permission for IEP meeting and documentation of contact.

Ed. 1109.04 2 files: notice of IEP meeting did not indicate purpose was to develop the statement of  
CFR.300.345(b)(2) transition services

1109.04 1 file: lacked evidence that procedural rights were given with notice of IEP meeting.  
CFR. 300.504(a)(2)

Ed. 1109.11 1 file: lacked evidence of regular and systematic monitoring of the IEP.  
CFR.300.347(a)(5) IEP did not include an explanation of the extent to which the student will not participate with non-disabled peers in regular class.

CFR.300.347(a)(7)I IEP did not include information regarding modifications in the administration of statewide or district-wide assessments.

Ed. 1111.01 1 file: lacked evidence that ESY was considered.  
CFR.300.309(a)

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Remind parents to check the agree/disagree box on IEP.
- For the expectation of regular class participation, the semantics of this statement of the IEP is confusing.
- .Establish file review process for students moving from elementary to middle school.

## GORHAM HIGH SCHOOL

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Resource Room

**NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED:** 4 FILES

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- Special education students are included in all classes to the greatest extent possible.
- Support staff are knowledgeable and enthusiastic.
- The Special Education Director is supportive and respected.
- The special education teacher is very knowledgeable about each student and his or her individual needs.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

CFR.300.347(a)(7)i 1 file: IEP did not include information regarding modifications in the administration of statewide or district-wide assessments.

1109.01 1 file: Signature page of IEP was missing.

1109.04 1 file: lacked evidence that procedural rights were given with notice of IEP meeting.  
CFR. 300.504(a)(2)

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- More training is needed in the area of how block scheduling affects the needs of special education students.
- The caseload of 40 middle and high school students is too much for one special education teacher. The addition of another special education teacher would be beneficial.
- The addition of more space or another resource room to separate the middle and high school students is suggested to reduce crowded conditions.

# **ADDENDUM**

## **JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM**

**SAU 20**

**Student File Review**

**Case Study Document**

**Reimbursement Claim Form**

**Case Study Addendum Form**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADDENDUM</b> <b>JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM</b></p>
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**SAU 20**

**NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED:        0 FILES**

There are currently no James O' students in SAU 20.